

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01999 272010Z
ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPH, PN
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

1-PANAMA CITY.--ALL MORNINGS MARCH 27 FRONT-PAGED FOREIGN
MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE WITH FULL TEXTS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH
OF THE HERE-TO-FORE UNPUBLISHED SENATE RESOLUTION ON THE
NEUTRALITY TREATY WITH ALL AMENDMENTS, RESERVATIONS AND
UNDERSTANDINGS. ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE, THE MINISTRY
REPEATS ITS EARLIER DECISION NOT TO COMMENT UNTIL BOTH
TREATIES HAVE BEEN DISPOSED OF, HOWEVER RECOMMENDS THE READING
OF THE TEXTS TO THE PUBLIC "IN ORDER TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT
IN MAKING THE MOST PATRIOTIC DECISION, WHICH, AS GENERAL
TORRIJOS HAS SAID, WILL BE (MADE) WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A
GREAT NATIONAL CONSENSUS."

2-A FIRST READING OF THE SPANISH VERSION OF THE COMMUNIQUE
AS CARRIED IN ALL THREE SPANISH-LANGUAGE DAILIES THIS MORNING
REVEALED ONE MAJOR OMISSION. THE CRUCIAL PHRASE IN THE
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"DECONCINI AMENDMENT," "INCLUDING THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE
IN PANAMA," OMITTS THE TWO WORDS 'IN PANAMA'." THE ENGLISH
VERSION CARRIED IN THE STAR & HERALD IS FAITHFUL TO THE ORIGINAL
AND DOES NOT, REPEAT DOES NOT, OMIT THE TWO WORDS "IN PANAMA."
THE MORNING RADIO TALK SHOWS DID NOT NOTE THE ABOVE DISCREPANCY,
HOWEVER, USIS HAS ALREADY RECEIVED QUERIES INDICATING THAT THE
OMISSION DID NOT GO UNNOTICED.

3-COMMENTARY ON THE TREATIES OVER THE LONG EASTER WEEKEND WAS SPARESE, MOSTLY ECHOING THE GOP "WAIT-AND-SEE BUT DON'T ACCEPT ANYTHING WHICH WOULD STAIN THE NATIONAL DIGNITY" LINE. THIS WAS THE GIST OF THE MARCH 27 CRITICA EDIT, HOWEVER CAMILO O. PEREZ IN HIS BONA FIDE COLUMN ON THE CRITICA EDITORIAL PAGE WENT ONE STEP FURTHER. ACCORDING TO PEREZ: "OUR POSITION (WITH REGARD TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMITMENT TO GENERAL TORRIJOS) WITH REFERENCE TO THAT IS ONE OF CALM STUDY AND CAUTIOUS WAITING. BECAUSE, AS WE HAVE INSISTED BEFORE, IT IS A PROBLEM FOR THE AMERICAN POLITICIANS AND NOT US PANAMANIAN. NEVERTHELESS, IT WOULD NOT SURPRISE US IF IN THE FUTURE WASHINGTON WOULD DECIDE TO SHIFT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF REJECTING THE TREATY TOWARD PANAMA."

4-PEREZ CONTINUES: "NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABOVE, WE THINK THAT THE FIRST TREATY WAS ALREADY REJECTED BY THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THE WAITING PERIOD FOR THE OTHER TREATY, THAT IS THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY, IS A MATTER OF PROCEDURE IN ORDER TO FORMULATE SAID REJECTION." ITEM JORDEN

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